

Air Pouch
PRIORITY

~~SECRET~~
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : **AMCONGEN, Hong Kong**

1716

DESP. NO.

TO : **THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.**

March 23, 1954
DATE

REF

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	IN F O
	3-40	DE/R-2 100-4 UNCL-4 P-1 5-5-1 C/A-7 001-1 EUR 5 L-2

SUBJECT:

American POWs Reported en route to Siberia

A recently arrived Greek refugee from Manchuria has reported seeing several hundred American prisoners of war being transferred from Chinese trains to Russian trains at Manchouli near the border of Manchuria and Siberia. The POWs were seen late in 1951 and in the spring of 1952 by the informant and a Russian friend of his. The informant was interrogated on two occasions by the Assistant Air Liaison Officer and the Consulate General agrees with his evaluation of the information as probably true and the source as of unknown reliability. The full text of the initial Air Liaison Office report follows:

First report dated March 16, 1954, from Air Liaison Office, Hong Kong, to USAF, Washington, C2.

"This office has interviewed refugee source who states that he observed hundreds of prisoners of war in American uniforms being sent into Siberia in late 1951 and 1952. Observations were made at Manchouli (Lupin), 49°50'-117°30' Manchuria Road Map, AMSL 201 First Edition, on USSR-Manchurian border. Source observed POWs on railway station platform loading into trains for movement into Siberia. In railway restaurant source closely observed three POWs who were under guard and were conversing in English. POWs wore sleeve insignia which indicated POWs were Air Force noncommissioned officers. Source states that there were a great number of Negroes among POWs shipments and also states that at no time later were any POWs observed returning from Siberia. Source does not wish to be identified for fear of reprisals against friends in Manchuria, however is willing to cooperate in answering further questions and will be available Hong Kong for questioning for the next four days."

Upon receipt of this information, USAF, Washington, requested elaboration of the following points:

1. Description of uniforms or clothing worn by POWs including ornaments.
2. Physical condition of POWs.

DNForman/RDYoder/jme

~~SECRET~~

INFORMATION COPY

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 12356, Sec. 3.3

MDG 142401

By JPB NARS, Date 10/94

~~SECRET~~
(Classification)

3. Nationality of guards.
4. Specific dates of observations.
5. Destination in Siberia.
6. Presence of Russians in uniform or civilian clothing accompanying movement of POWs.
7. Complete description of three POWs specifically mentioned.

The Air Liaison Office complied by submitting the telegram quoted below.

*FROM USAIRLO SGN LACKEY. CITE C 4. REUR 53737 following answers submitted to seven questions.

- (1) POWs wore OD outer clothing described as not heavy inasmuch as weather considered early spring. Source identified from pictures service jacket, field, M1943. No belongings except canteen. No ornaments observed.
- (2) Condition appeared good, no wounded all ambulatory.
- (3) Station divided into two sections with tracks on each side of loading platform. On Chinese side POWs accompanied by Chinese guards. POWs passed through gate bisecting platform to Russian train manned and operated by Russians. Russian trainmen wore dark blue or black tunic with silver colored shoulder boards. Source says this regular train uniform but he knows the trainmen are military and wearing regular train uniforms.
- (4) Interrogation with aid of more fluent interpreter reveals source first observed POWs in railroad station in spring 1951. Second observation was outside city of Manchouli about three months later with POW train headed towards station where he observed POW transfer. Source was impressed with second observation because of large number of Negroes among POWs. Source states that he was told by a very close Russian friend whose job was numbering railroad cars at Manchouli every time subsequent POW shipments passed through Manchouli. Source says these shipments were reported often and occurred when United Nation forces in Korea were on the offensive.
- (5) Unknown.
- (6) Only Russian accompanying POWs were those who manned train.

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 12333, Sec. 3.3

NDG 142401

By JPB NARS Date 10/94

~~SECRET~~

Page 3 of 1716
Desp. No. 1716
From Hong Kong

~~SECRET~~
(Classification)

Page _____ of _____
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. _____
From _____

(7) Three POWs observed in station restaurant appeared to be 30 to 35. Source identified Air Force non-commissioned officer sleeve insignia of Staff Sergeant rank, stated that several inches above insignia there was a propeller but says that all three did not have propeller. Three POWs accompanied by Chinese guard. POWs appeared thin but in good health and spirits, were being given what source described as good food. POWs were talking in English but did not converse with guard. Further information as to number of POWs observed source states that first observation filled a seven passenger car train and second observation about the same. Source continues to emphasize the number of Negro troops, which evidently impressed him because he had seen so few Negroes before. Source further states that his Russian railroad worker friend was attempting to obtain a visa to Canada and that he could furnish more information, the railroad workers name is Leon Strelnikov whose mothers sister lives in Canada and is applying for a visa for Strelnikov (phonetic). Comment Reporting Officer: Source is very careful not to exaggerate information and is positive of identification of American POWs. In view of information contained in Charity Interrogation Report No. 619 dated 5 February 54, Reporting Officer gives above information rating of F-2. Source departing Hong Kong today by ship. Future address on file this office."

In this connection the Department's attention is called to Charity Interrogation Report No. 619, forwarded to the Department under cover of a letter dated March 1, 1954, to Mr. A. Sabin Chase, DRF. Section 6 of this report states, "On another occasion source saw several coaches full of Europeans who were also taken to USSR. They were not Russians. Source passed the coaches several times and heard them talk in a language unknown to him."

cc: Taipei
Moscow
London
Paris

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 12336, Sec. 3.3

NDG 842401

by JPB NARS, Date 10/94

Julian F. Harrington
Julian F. Harrington
American Consul General

~~SECRET~~

Air Pouch

~~SECRET~~

AMCONGEN, Hong Kong

1716

March 23, 1954

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 12359, Sec. 3.3

NDG 842401

By APB NARS Date 10/94

AMC

HCS*

PUB

POI

CON

ADM

SEC

American POWs Reported en route to Siberia

A recently arrived Greek refugee from Manchuria has reported seeing several hundred American prisoners of war being transferred from Chinese trains to Russian trains at Manchouli near the border of Manchuria and Siberia. The POWs were seen late in 1951 and in the spring of 1952 by the informant and a Russian friend of his. The informant was interrogated on two occasions by the Assistant Air Liaison Officer and the Consulate General agrees with his evaluation of the information as probably true and the source as of unknown reliability. The full text of the initial Air Liaison Office report follows:

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Upon receipt of this information, USAF, Washington, requested elaboration of the following points:

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2. Physical condition of POWs.

DNForman/RDYeder/jmc

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

3. Nationality of guards.
4. Specific dates of observations.
5. Destination in Siberia.
6. Presence of Russians in uniform or civilian clothing accompanying movement of POWs.
7. Complete description of three POWs specifically mentioned.

The Air Liaison Office complied by submitting the telegram quoted below.

*FROM CHAIRMAN NGH LACKBY. CITE C 4. REUR 53737 following answers submitted to seven questions.

- (1) POWs wore OD outer clothing described as not heavy inasmuch as weather considered early spring. Source identified from pictures service jacket, field, M1943. No belongings except canteen. No ornaments observed.
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~~SECRET~~

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In this connection the Department's attention is called to Charity Interrogation Report No. 619, forwarded to the Department under cover of a letter dated March 1, 1954, to Mr. A. Sabin Chase, DRS. Section 6 of this report states, "On another occasion source saw several coaches full of Europeans who were also taken to USSR. They were not Russians. Source passed the coaches several times and heard them talk in a language unknown to him."

Julian F. Harrington
American Consul General

cc: Taipei
Moscow
London
Paris

~~SECRET~~

FORM 05-4 12-27-50		DEPARTMENT OF STATE TRANSMITTAL SLIP		CLASSIFICATION SECRET FOUO	
TO The American Embassy, MOSCOW				DATE POL 1/9/54 AGE	
TRANSMITTED FOR				CON	
X	INFORMATION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S REPRESENTATIVES	INFORMATION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE			
	TRANSMISSION TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE	APPROPRIATE REPLY TO THE INDIVIDUAL			
	SUBMISSION OF A REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT. REFER TO	INFORMATION OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FOLLOWING U. S. AGENCY:			
ADDITIONAL REMARKS DECLASSIFIED E. O. 12356, Sec. 3.3 <u>NDC 242401</u> By <u>JFB</u> NARS, Date <u>10/94</u>					
WHEN A REPLY TO THE DEPARTMENT IS INDICATED PLEASE REFER TO THE FILE NUMBER AND THE DRAFTING OFFICE.					
FILE NO.		SIGNATURE W. G. Jones			
CLASSIFICATION SECRET		DIVISION FE:NA			

~~Secret~~

File

~~SECRET~~

April 20, 1954

SECSTATE / 285-

ROUTINE

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 12958, Sec. 3.3

NDG 842401

By JPB NND, Date 10/94

Redeptel 666.

To EE from O'SHAUGHNESSY*

The Ambassador being absent from Moscow for at least another week I propose subject to Dept's approval to deliver aide memoire ~~XXXX~~ to one of Deputy Foreign Ministers in compliance with reftel. Following is text of proposed aide memoire:

US Govt has recently received reports which support earlier indications that American prisoners-of-war who had seen action in Korea have been transported to USSR and are now in Soviet custody. US Govt desires to receive urgently all information available to Soviet Govt concerning these American POW's and to arrange their repatriation at the earliest possible time.

BOHLEN

AMB
C AN
CHRON

LOS: gmd

~~Secret~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~
~~SECRET~~

ACTION COPY

666 FROM DEPT

ACTION: DHH

SENT APRIL 19 1 pm

RECD: APRIL 20 1 am

20-1-15
DH: 20-1-15
F: 6

According Despatch 1716 from Hong Kong airpouched you, a recently arrived Greek refugee from Manchuria reported seeing several hundred American POW's being transferred Chinese trains to Russian trains Manchouli late 1951 and early 1952. Some POW's wore sleeve insignia indicating they were Air Force non-coms. Great number Negro troops also observed. This report corroborates previous indications UNC POW's might have been shipped to Siberia during Korean hostilities.

United States has been greatly concerned general subject UNC personnel who may still be Communist custody. Department has just accepted British offer make representations Peiping behalf UNC personnel who may be Chinese Communist custody. Question raising this matter informally Geneva under careful consideration.

Unless you perceive objection, request you approach highest available level Foreign Ministry and leave Aide Memoire undictating reports have now come attention United States Government which support earlier indications that American Prisoners of War Korea had been transported into Soviet Union and are now Soviet custody. Request fullest possible information these POW's and their reparation earliest possible time.

In your discussion with Foreign Office, you may desire inform Soviets without revealing source that we have reliable accounts transfers POW's Manchouli.

DULLES

RL:gr

AMB CHAN CHRON

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 12958, Sec. 3.3

NDG 842401

By MPG NERS Date 10/94

~~SECRET~~

TEL _____ April 30, 1954
EOS:gmd

~~SECRET~~
~~Secret~~

ACTION COPY *F:16*

ACTION: DHH

RECD: APRIL 24 7 am

684 FROM DEPT

BENT APRIL 23 7 pm

Re Moscow's 1285.

In view Tokyo's 1835 rptd Moscow 10, Tokyo's 1945 rptd Moscow 13 and Tokyo's 2545 rptd Moscow 22. Department has revised wording proposed aide memoire in order include US military personnel who may be USSR result plane crashes. Proposed following aide memoire subject your comments.

"US Government has recently received reports which support earlier indications that American prisoners of war who had been action in Korea have been transported to USSR and that they and other US military personnel are now in Soviet custody. US Government desires to receive urgently all information available to Soviet Government concerning these American personnel and arrange their repatriation at the earliest possible time."

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 12356, Sec. 3.3

NDG 842401

By gpb NARS, Date 10/24

SMITH

GR:gr

AMB CHAN CHRON

~~SECRET~~

~~Secret~~

DECLASSIFIED

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

E. O. 12386, Sec. 3.3

NO 7 14241

by JEB NARS, Date 10/94

~~SECRET~~

Classification

April 30, 1954

Date

TO: <u>SECSTATE</u>	NO. <u>13465</u>	PRECEDENCE	<u>ROUTINE</u>
INFO: _____	NO. _____		
_____	NO. _____		
_____	NO. _____		
_____	NO. _____		

REDEPTTEL 684 April 23.

I see no objection to delivering aide memoire as set forth in reftel. However, in view of absense MOLOTOV, GROMYKO and KUZNETSOV who are all in Geneva I believe that personal delivery would serve little purpose. With this in mind I propose two alternatives either (1) to send aide memoire to FONOFF to put matter on record or (2) matter could be raised informally at Geneva with Gromyko. Would appreciate Dept's views.

Another factor to be taken into consideration is that we have been and will continue to press cases of MARCHUK, VERDINE and NOBLE which seem well documented in contrast to the situation described in HongKong's despatch and the several telegrams from Tokyo. In this connection the addition of words "and other US military personnel" might be taken to apply to these cases and thus put well-documented cases under active consideration in same category with those on which our information is much vaguer.

AMB
CHAN
CHRON

EO'Shaughnessy:gmd

~~SECRET~~
Classification

~~Secret~~

BOHLEN

CS

~~SECRET~~

~~Secret~~

ACTION COPY

697 from DEPARTMENT

ACTION: DHH

SENT May 3 , 7 PM

RECD May 4, 6 AM

Your 1348

Request aide memoire be sent Foreign Office put matter on record. Re alternative two, US Delegation Geneva already advised raise matter informally with Soviets if expedient.

Agree elimination words "and other US military personnel". Department studying possibility subsequent separate approach other personnel about whom no representations yet been made.

E. O. 12812, Sec. 1.3

NDG 842401

MURPHY

By 893 WARS, Date 10/94

ve/mj

AMB
CHAN
CHRON

~~SECRET~~

No. 947

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and has the honor to request the Ministry's assistance in the following matter.

The United States Government has recently received reports which support earlier indications that American prisoners of war who had seen action in Korea have been transported to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and that they are now in Soviet custody. The United States Government desires to receive urgently all information available to the Soviet Government concerning these American personnel and to arrange their repatriation at the earliest possible time.

DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 12356, Sec. 3.3

NDC-442401

By JPB NARS, Date 10/94

American Embassy,

Moscow, April 5, 1954.

EO'Shaughnessy
DHHenry:mfc

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3
NDG 4/24/01
By QPB NARS Date 10/24/01

OUTGOING TELEGRAM
~~OFFICIAL~~
~~USE ONLY~~
OFFICIAL USE ONLY
Classification

MAY 12, 1954
Date

TO: <u>SECSTATE</u>	NO. <u>1400</u>	PRECEDENCE <u>PRIORITY</u>
INFO: _____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____

Reference Department's telegram No. 697 of May 3.

Embassy has just received note No. 30/osa of May 12 from Soviet Foreign Ministry. Translation as follows:

BEGIN VERBATIM TEXT

In connection with note No. 974 of Embassy United States of America, received by Ministry Foreign Affairs of Union Soviet Socialist Republics on May 5, 1954, Ministry has honor to state following.

U.S. Government's assertion contained in indicated note that American prisoners of war who participated in military actions in Korea have allegedly been transferred to Soviet Union and at present time are being kept under Soviet guard is devoid of any foundation whatsoever and is clearly far-fetched, since there are not and have not been any such persons in Soviet Union.

BOHLEN

DHHenry:mfc

~~OFFICIAL~~
~~USE ONLY~~
OFFICIAL USE ONLY
Classification

AMB CHAN CHRON

№ 30/оса.

В связи с нотой Посольства Соединенных Штатов Америки № 947, полученной Министерством Иностранных Дел Союза Советских Социалистических Республик 5 мая 1954 г., Министерство имеет честь заявить следующее:

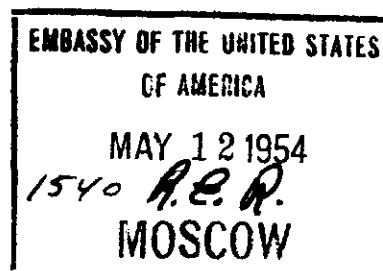
Содержащееся в указанной ноте утверждение Правительства США, что американские военнопленные, участвовавшие в военных действиях в Корее, якобы перевезены в Советский Союз и в настоящее время содержатся под советской охраной, лишено каких-либо оснований и является явно надуманным, так как в Советском Союзе не было и нет таких лиц.



Москва, "12" мая 1954 года.

В ПОСОЛЬСТВО
СОЕДИНЕННЫХ ШТАТОВ АМЕРИКИ

г. Москва.



DECLASSIFIED

H. G. 12386, Sec. 3.3

NDG-842401

By JPB NARS Date 10/44

~~Secret~~

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

SECRET

Classification

May 13, 1954

Date

TO: <u>SECSTATE</u>	NO. <u>1405</u>	PRECEDENCE <u>PRIORITY</u>
INFO: _____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____

Soviet press May 13 carries announcement Soviet Ministry Foreign Affairs which begins as follows: BEGIN VERBATIM TEXT

On May 5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs USSR received note from American Embassy according to which Government USA allegedly possesses information that American prisoners of war who participated in military actions in Korea have been transferred to Soviet Union.

On May 12 Ministry Foreign Affairs sent Embassy USA answering note of following content: END VERBATIM TEXT

There follows text of note as given in Embtel 1400.

As of possible assistance in any statement may wish to make to press, following is first paragraph Embassy Note 947, May 5:
BEGIN VERBATIM TEXT:

Embassy of USA presents its compliments to Ministry Foreign Affairs of Union Soviet Socialist Republics and has honor to request Ministry's assistance in following matter. END VERBATIM TEXT.

Second paragraph is, of course, that given in Deptel 684 April 23 minus words "and other US military personnel".

DHHenry:mfc

AMB CHAN CHRON

SECRET

Classification

BOHLEN

BB

1pm

**OFFICIAL
USE ONLY**
OUTGOING TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL USE ONLY
Classification

MAY 13, 1954
Date

08/1200

TO: SECSTATE	NO. 1407	PRECEDENCE ROUTINE
INFO: _____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____
_____	NO. _____	_____

Re Embtel 1400 containing text Soviet note denying USSR holding any American POWs from Korea.

Russian word translated as "far-fetched" in text of note is "nadumanny". Although dictionary definition is "far-fetched", we are inclined to think that "contrived" would better convey connotation of Russian word.

~~EXCLUDED~~
E. O. 12350, Sec. 3.3
NDG 642401
By JPB NARS, Date 10/24

BOHLEN



DHHenry:mfc

AMB

CHAN

CHRON

**OFFICIAL
USE ONLY**

OFFICIAL USE ONLY
Classification

AIR POUCH

PRIORITY

~~SECRET~~

(Security Classification)

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCHDO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE
DECLASSIFIED

E. O. 18386, Sec. 3.3

NDG-84249

By JPB NARS Date 10/94

FROM :

MOSCOM**416**

DESP. NO.

TO :

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.**May 14, 1954**

DATE

REF :

See first paragraph

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	I N F O OTHER

SUBJECT:

American Prisoners of War from the Korean Fighting Held in the USSR

REF: Hong Kong Despatch 1716, March 23; Department's Telegrams 666, April 19; 684, April 23; 697, May 3; Embassy Telegrams 1285, April 20; 1348, April 30; 1400, May 12; 1405 and 1407, May 13, 1954.

To complete the Department's records the Embassy encloses the following documents concerning the United States Government's inquiry to the Soviet Government regarding American prisoners of war from the Korean fighting who were reported to have been seen in the USSR:

1. The Embassy's note No. 947 of May 5, 1954, to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through a typing error this note was originally dated April 5, 1954, but all subsequent references to it, including those of the Soviet Government, have been to May 5, 1954).
2. One copy of the Russian text of note No. 30/osa of May 12, 1954, from the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. A translation into English of the above note.
4. One copy of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs press announcement regarding the exchange of notes, clipped from Pravda of May 13.
5. A translation into English of the above announcement.

For the Ambassador:**Elim O'Shaughnessy**
Counselor of Embassy

Encl: a/s
Department please pass to: London; Paris; Rome; Berlin; Vienna; Bonn; Peripheral Reporting Unit, Frankfurt; Hong Kong; Tokyo.

DHHenry:mfc

REPORTER

~~SECRET~~

UNCLASSIFIED

(Classification)

No. 947

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and has the honor to request the Ministry's assistance in the following matter.

The United States Government has recently received reports which support earlier indications that American prisoners of war who had seen action in Korea have been transported to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and that they are now in Soviet custody. The United States Government desires to receive urgently all information available to the Soviet Government concerning these American personnel and to arrange their repatriation at the earliest possible time.

American Embassy,

Moscow, May 5, 1954.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

(Classification)

No. 30/esa

In connection with note No. 974 of the Embassy of the United States of America, received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on May 5, 1954, the Ministry has the honor to state the following.

The United States Government's assertion contained in the indicated note that American prisoners of war who participated in military actions in Korea have allegedly been transferred to the Soviet Union and at the present time are being kept under Soviet guard is devoid of any foundation whatsoever and is clearly contrived [madumanny], since there are not and have not been any such persons in the Soviet Union.

Moscow, May 12, 1954.

**To the Embassy of
The United States of America,
Moscow.**

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

(Classification)

Announcement which appeared in Pravda May 13, 1954.

On May 5 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR received a note from the American Embassy according to which the Government of the USA allegedly possesses information that American prisoners of war who participated in military actions in Korea have been transferred to the Soviet Union.

On May 12 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent the Embassy of the USA an answering note of the following content.

"In connection with note No. 974 of the Embassy of the United States of America, received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on May 5, 1954, the Ministry has the honor to state the following.

The United States Government's assertion contained in the indicated note that American prisoners of war who participated in military actions in Korea have allegedly been transferred to the Soviet Union and at the present time are being kept under Soviet guard is devoid of any foundation whatsoever and is clearly contrived, since there are not and have not been any such persons in the Soviet Union."

UNCLASSIFIED

~~OFFICIAL
USE ONLY~~
OFFICIAL USE ONLY

ACTION COPY

715 FROM DEPARTMENT

ACTION: DPHENRY *15/12/94*

SENT 13 MAY 5 pm

RECD 14 MAY 6 am

In view publication Soviet Note of May 12, Department released both texts noon today. Declined comment on sources of information, number of prisoners, future actions.

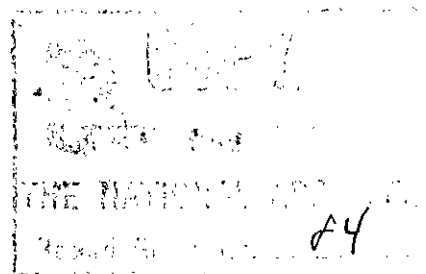
DULLES

ral/mcc

DECLASSIFIED
E. O. 12958, Sec. 1.3
NDG 142041
By JPB 10/94

AMB
CHAN
CYRON

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American Embassy Moscow
Classified General Records, 1954
Decimal 321.4 U.S. Forces in Korea
(Box 191)